

Collabolatte: Internal Pilot Proposal

Proposal from: [Your Name] **Date:** January 2026 **Status:** Seeking permission to run a small pilot

The Problem

In large organisations, valuable conversations never happen. Not because people lack goodwill, but because:

- **Scale kills serendipity** — you don't know who to reach
- **Cold outreach feels awkward** — initiating without context is uncomfortable
- **No shared excuse to meet** — there's no natural reason to connect cross-team

New joiners struggle to build networks once onboarding energy fades. Hybrid workers see weak ties decay fastest. Ideas stay local, duplication persists, and the organisation feels more fragmented than it needs to be.

The Proposal

Collabolatte is a lightweight, opt-in matching tool that periodically pairs colleagues across team boundaries for a coffee chat.

- **System initiates** — no one has to make the awkward first move
- **Low stakes** — if you miss a cycle, nothing happens
- **No surveillance** — we don't track whether you meet

In one sentence: A shared excuse to meet someone you wouldn't otherwise encounter.

Why Not Use Existing Tools?

Existing Tool	Problem
Donut, RandomCoffee, etc.	Built for HR metrics — dashboards, participation tracking, manager visibility
Mentoring programmes	High commitment, formal structure, often fades after launch
ERG events	Valuable but infrequent; doesn't create 1:1 connections

The difference: Collabolatte is designed for *participants*, not *measurement*. No one is watching. That's why people might actually show up.

What I'm Asking For

Permission to run a small pilot with 20-50 volunteers across [target departments/teams].

Resource	What's Needed	Notes
Time	Build on personal time / [20% time if applicable]	Minimal work-hour impact

Resource	What's Needed	Notes
Azure hosting	~£10-20/month	I can cover personally if needed
IT support	Entra ID app registration	One-time setup, standard process
HR awareness	Not asking for promotion, just no objection	Optional co-sponsorship welcome

I'm not asking for budget, headcount, or a formal programme.

What Success Looks Like

After 2-3 monthly cycles:

Signal	Measure
Cycles run reliably	2–3 cycles complete on schedule
Notifications deliver	Delivery failures are visible and recoverable (no silent errors)
Trust preserved	Zero concerns about pressure or surveillance
Value emerges	A small handful of unprompted anecdotes (not tracked by the system)

Success is quiet. If it's working, people just... keep doing it.

What If It Fails?

Scenario	Response
No one signs up	Shut down, delete data, lesson learned
People sign up but don't meet	Shut down or adjust cadence
Complaints about time waste	Shut down immediately
IT/HR concerns emerge	Pause and address before continuing

Exit is easy. This is a lightweight experiment, not a platform commitment.

- No long-term contracts
 - No vendor lock-in
 - No data retained beyond what participants see
 - Complete shutdown takes one afternoon
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Risk Mitigation

Concern	Mitigation
Data privacy	Minimal data (name, email, department). No tracking of meetings. GDPR-aligned by design.

Concern	Mitigation
Shadow IT	Seeking explicit permission; happy to register formally with IT
HR territory	Not replacing existing initiatives; complementary and opt-in
Time distraction	Built on personal time; pilot management is lightweight
Reputational	Opt-in only; no forced participation; easy exit

The Research Behind It

This isn't just a hunch. The concept is grounded in:

- **Granovetter's "Strength of Weak Ties"** (1973) — weak connections provide novel information
- **Burt's "Structural Holes"** — people bridging groups drive innovation
- **Post-pandemic workplace research** — hybrid work accelerates weak tie decay

[Full research document available if useful]

Timeline

Phase	Duration	Activity
Approval	1-2 weeks	This conversation
Setup	2-3 weeks	Build and deploy (already designed)
Pilot	2-3 months	2-3 matching cycles with volunteers
Decision	After pilot	Continue, expand, or shut down

The Ask (Summary)

"Can I run a small, opt-in pilot to see if this helps people connect across teams? I'll build it on my own time, it costs almost nothing, and if it doesn't work, we shut it down with no consequences."

Questions?

Happy to discuss:

- Technical approach
- Privacy safeguards
- How participants would experience it
- What happens with the data
- How we'd know if it's working

